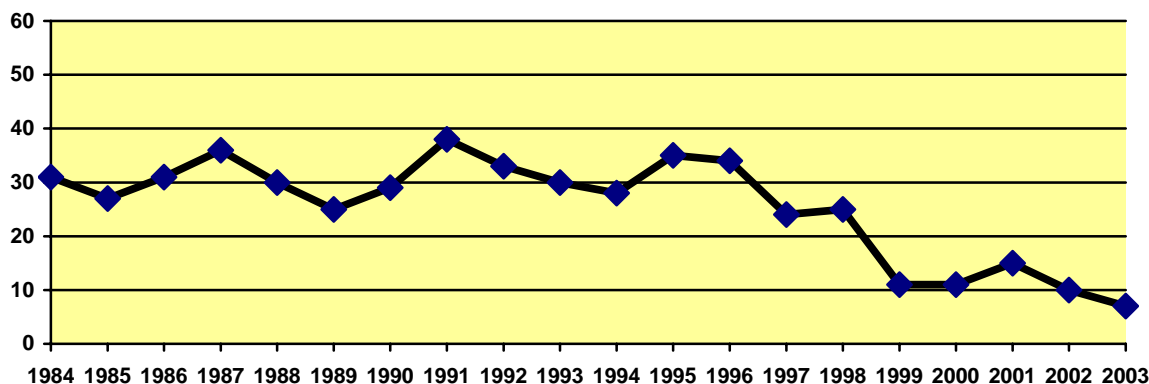


RAPE

Forcible Rape, as defined by the Uniform Crime Reporting Program is the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force, and assaults with the intent to commit rape, are also included; however, statutory rape (without force) and other sex offenses are excluded.

Twenty Year Review:
Rape in Cambridge, 1984-2003



10 Reported in 2002 • Seven Reported in 2003

	Acq.	Cont.	Blitz	Dom.	Total
Complete	2	2	0	0	4
Attempt	1	1	1	0	3
Total	3	3	1	0	7

The Cambridge Police Department's Sexual Assault Unit reports that four rapes and three attempted rapes were reported in Cambridge in 2003. This represents a 30 percent decrease from 2002. In six of the seven incidents (4 rapes, 3 attempts), the victim knew his/her assailant; in the remaining incident, the aggressor was a stranger to the victim. The Sexual Assault Unit reports that five of the cases have been cleared by arrest or indictment.

Categories of Rape

Acquaintance Rapes are non-domestic rapes committed by someone who knows the victim. They include rapes of co-workers, schoolmates, friends, and other acquaintances, including "date rapes."

Blitz Rapes are **stranger** rapes in which the rapist assaults the victim on the street with no prior contact. Generally, the suspect "comes out of nowhere." One such rape was reported in 2003 that occurred when a male suspect approached a female victim from behind and knocked her down. The victim then began trying to fight the suspect off of her. The suspect was able to get inside the victim's pants, however, the victim's boyfriend scared the suspect off before he was able to commit the rape.

Contact Rapes are **stranger** rapes in which the suspect contacts the victim and tries to gain his/her confidence before assaulting him/her. Contact rapists typically pick up their victims in bars, lure them into their cars or houses, or otherwise try to coerce the victim into a situation in which they can begin their assault. No such incidents occurred in the City in 2003.

Domestic Rapes involve rapes between spouses, romantic partners, and family members.

The 2003 rape total of seven incidents was the lowest number recorded by this department in the past twenty-five years. We hesitate to deem this decline a trend, however, given the tendency of rape statistics to fluctuate greatly from year to year (see the graph above). The number of rapes that go unreported each year is uncertain; experts estimate that as high as 50 percent of domestic and acquaintance rapes are not reported by the victim.

Of the three categorizations of rape reported in 2003, the "blitz" rape, or "street rape," is the classification that probably provokes the most fear in the average citizen. Only one rape reported in 2003 fell into this category, which

illustrates that in the majority of circumstances, the victim knows his/her assailant. This was the case in the remaining six incidents over the past year.

Analysis of the “blitz” rapes reported in Cambridge over the past several years shows a trend of early morning (12:00 A.M. to 4:00 A.M.) weekend occurrences. This year’s “blitz” rape differed from this trend in that it occurred in the early morning hours of a weekday. In past years, such as in 1997, clusters of these stranger rapes have appeared around Central Square, despite extra patrol allocation.

Prior to 1998, Cambridge averaged four to seven “stranger” rapes each year. Two to four were usually street abductions or “blitz” rapes, one or two are usually home invasions, and the remainder are “contact” rapes. In the five years since 1998, there have been a combined total of five blitz rapes and two home invasions.

Regional/Nationwide Rape Stats

In 2002*, cities nationwide with populations between 94,000 and 106,000 reported an average of 35 rapes. Cambridge’s 2002 total of 10 rapes is considerably below the national average.

For the third consecutive year, the FBI has reported an increase in the number of female forcible rapes. The FBI estimates that the number of rapes in 2002 increased by 4.7 percent from 2001’s estimated total. Like the Cambridge Police Department, the FBI cautions that a significant portion of rapes go unrecorded, making the validity of the statistics uncertain.

Locally, cities with populations comparable to Cambridge have reported an average of 22 rapes per 100,000 residents, which is significantly above Cambridge’s total. These cities include Brockton (44), Fall River (48), Lowell (47), Lynn (9), and Quincy (17).

**National and Regional Statistics for 2003 are not yet available*

PREVENTING RAPE

- The Cambridge Police Department offers a *Rape Aggression Defense* (R.A.D.) course for women seeking to learn how to physically protect themselves against rape and other forms of violence. The course is free and is taught by a certified R.A.D. instructor. For more information, call the Cambridge Police Department’s Community Relations Department at (617) 349-6009.
- Be aware of your surroundings when walking down the street. Walk briskly and confidently.
- At night, try to avoid walking alone, particularly after 9:00PM. Stick to main streets with as much car and foot traffic as possible. Avoid public parks, areas with excessive trees and bushes, dark streets and alleys, and other “shortcuts.”
- Keep an arm’s length away from strangers. If you think someone suspicious is approaching you or following you, cross to the other side of the street and head for the nearest public place.
- Know which stores and other public places are open along your route. Whether walking home, to work, or jogging, try to vary your route frequently.
- When streets are sparsely populated, make brief eye contact with people as you pass them.
- When parking at night, try to park in well-lit spots. Lock your car door and, when returning to your car, have your keys ready.
- Never hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers.
- Know the full name of each person you date, his occupation, and where he lives.
- Never invite a person whom you have met on the street, in a bar, or in another public place to be alone with you.
- If you are a victim of rape, report the crime. Counseling, shelters, and other services are available for you, and you may prevent another person from being victimized.
- The Cambridge Rape Crisis Center is available (617) 492-7273. The Rape Crisis Center supports a 24-hour hotline, support groups, one-on-one counseling, and community education programs. All its services are free.